



**HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

Date: February 2, 2010

To: Academic Senate Executive Committee

From: Integrated Curriculum Committee

Re: Suspension of GIS Option in NRPI Major and creation of Geospatial Technologies Task Force

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The Program Prioritization process resulted in a number of programs being placed in Category I, Enhance, and Category IV, Restructure or Eliminate. On 23 March 2009 Interim Provost Snyder released his recommendations regarding the future of all of the programs in Category IV and some of those in Category I. These programs were requested by the temporary Academic Planning Committee (APC) to submit a Report responding to the prioritization categorization and the Provost's recommendations to the newly formed Integrated Curriculum Committee (ICC) by 14 Sept. 2009.

This fall, the ICC assumed responsibility for completing the Post-prioritization process. The committee followed the process outlined by last year's ad hoc APC (links to pertinent documents can be found at the end of this memo). The ICC's Academic Master Planning Subcommittee (AMP) was assigned to complete an in-depth review of the program proposals and responses, and make a recommendation to the ICC for programs in Prioritization Category 4 using a university-wide perspective. To accomplish this, the AMP reviewed the recommendations of the prioritization task force, deans, and the provost, program responses to the prioritization report, program proposals requested by the APC and all pertinent documents submitted, and met with a program representative to discuss the proposals and recommendations. The AMP recommendation was then developed and referred to the ICC for discussion.

The AMP/ICC used the following guidelines when formulating the recommendation provided below.

- Begin with the Prioritization Task Force recommendation as the starting point.
- Review Prioritization criteria: alignment with HSU mission and vision, program quality, cost effectiveness, and program demand
- Determine whether the program response provides a compelling case for overriding the recommendations of Prioritization Task Force, Deans, and Provost.

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- Consider the ramifications for other programs of overriding Category 4 recommendations, given the original goal of prioritization to change the campus program mix, combined with the current budget crisis and the need to reduce Academic Affairs' base budget.

The NRPI program as a whole was placed in Category 1 by the Program Prioritization Task Force, but with a caveat of Category 4 for low-enrolled options, and the suggestion that there be a "critical review of numerous options with eye toward eliminating those that are low-enrolled. Review efficacy of GIS option and the certificate program." The Dean's and Provost's recommendations also supported reorganization of the program, with an elimination of low-enrolled options.

As directed in a memo sent from the Academic Planning Committee on April 29, 2009, a planning report for restructuring the major was submitted to the ICC on Sept 15, 2009, by a committee headed by Steve Martin, Chair of ENRS, and developed in consultation with Dean Howard of CNRS. The report outlined a series of proposals, many of which were approved by the Senate in December of 2009. One of the proposals, the elimination of the GIS Option, was not included in the December 2009 changes because the department wanted time to consider the Option in relationships to certain new statewide initiatives in the field. At the start of the Spring 2010 semester, NRPI recommended that the GIS Options should be suspended. The ICC concurs, and recommends to the Senate that NRPI's GIS Option be suspended.

Despite the recommendation to suspend the GIS Option in NRPI, the ICC recognizes that GIS and other Geospatial Technologies are of increasing importance to students in an ever-expanding array of disciplines. Thus, the ICC proposes the creation of an ad hoc Geospatial Technology Committee that will address the most efficient/effective ways to teach Geospatial Technology at HSU. The ICC recommends that membership of the committee should include:

One faculty member from each department currently teaching GIS Courses:

Forestry, Geography, Geology, NRPI, Sociology

A faculty member (to be identified based on interest) from CPS

One ITS Representative

The Vice Provost

The Associate Deans from all the Colleges

### Links to relevant documents:

Prioritization Process Site

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~aavp/Prioritization.html>

NRPI Response to Prioritization Report - ICC Sharepoint Site

<https://its-sharepoint.humboldt.edu/sites/dold/icc/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fsites%2fdold%2ficc%2fShared%20Documents%2fGeneral%20Resources%2fPost%20Prioritization%20Reports&FolderCTID=&View=%7b26B6770D%2d06F3%2d4469%2d9473%2dF70C87A38D97%7d>

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NRPI course and curriculum change forms – ICC Sharepoint Site

<https://its-sharepoint.humboldt.edu/sites/dold/icc/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fsites%2fdold%2ficc%2fShared%20Documents%2f20%5fICC%20Consent%20Calendar%2dApproval%20Pending&FolderCTID=&View=%7b26B6770D%2d06F3%2d4469%2d9473%2dF70C87A38D97%7d>

**Appendix:** The relevant sections of the Prioritization Report and Dean’s and Provost’s recommendations (cut and pasted from the documents referenced above):

### **Prioritization Report:**

1\*: Demand for program is high. Replacement of permanent positions is recommended. 4\*\*:  
Recommend critical review of numerous options with eye toward eliminating those that are low-enrolled. Review efficacy of GIS option and the certificate program.

### **Dean’s Recommendations:**

**NRPI**-It is very important that they restructure options. The argument that they “only have five options” really misses the point. If you divide their 120 majors among four years and five options you virtually guarantee continued low enrollments in the upper division courses. The argument that there is no cost savings associated with dropping the GIS option, for example, is in error. Those upper division courses could be taught less frequently or for cohorts of students in a certificate program. Certainly the program has lost faculty but the decline in student numbers started while the department was fully staffed. NRPI certainly has the potential for growth but it is hard for students to recognize what the program is from the outside. I think the department needs to refocus or rename its degree (perhaps environmental planning and education) and reduce its options. It is clear to me that the GIS option is not viable as a program option but the courses are vitally important to other disciplines and has considerable interest as a certificate program. It is also clear that the program needs more faculty resources for its enrollments to rebound. I wonder if the students would recognize the programs more easily if they were combined and offered as an option in environmental science. I am convinced they need another faculty even if their programs are restructured. The planning option is the strongest in NRPI and a faculty member there would also support one of the new options in ENV5.

**NRPI**-low enrolled options. See Comments from Category I. NRPI must develop a plan to combine or eliminate options, or potentially to roll some of those experiences into ENV5. **I recommend reorganization.**

### **Provost’s Recommendations:**

**Natural Resources – Planning and Interpretation:** I ask the Department to work with the Dean to develop a strategic plan that invests in the program, focuses on its strengths and eliminates low-enrolled options. The Department needs to reorganize its options. In particular, it

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needs a plan that balances the enrollment problems in the GIS option with the broad interdisciplinary interest in that area. The Dean recommends a certificate program. That may be the right solution. Any solution must be viable in terms of attracting sufficient numbers of students to the program. The plan needs to develop a hiring plan that shows the number of faculty, including permanent and temporary coverage of its programs. It needs to include benchmarks for judging program success. Once the Department and Dean have agreed upon a plan, it should go to the APC for evaluation and recommendation. This plan should be developed by the end of this semester.